
Mr. WISE's
SERMON
AT
RICHMOND,
On the DEATH of
King WILLIAM III.

To the Reader.

WHereas several who heard, and others of the Clergy and Laity, who since read this Discourse, believe that it answers the Design of the Text, as applied to *King William*, and that it deserves to make a more open Appearance; I am surpris'd into a Thought, which I could not otherwise have entertained, that the hasty Product of a very few Hours, especially as coming from me, can bear a publick View.



A
SERMON
Preach'd at the CHURCH of
RICHMOND
IN
SURREY,

Upon the DEATH of
WILLIAM III.
King of Great BRITAIN, FRANCE
and IRELAND, &c.

March the 22d, 1701.

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of Exeter College in Oxford.

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A

SERMON

RICHMOND

SURRY

WILLIAM



BY THOMAS

LONDON

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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd on the DEATH of
King WILLIAM III.

PROVERBS X. 7.

—*The Memory of the Just is blessed.*

WHILE others are venting their Thoughts and Tears upon the sad Occasion of our late King's Decease, I cannot stand silent or unconcerned, altho the Motive which actuates my Speech, and draws out my Sighs, is not so much the Example of others, as the Gratitude I owe to so Excellent a Prince; a Prince who in some Sense, like the Saviour of the World, *went about doing good*, and was often contented with as unhandson Returns; who laid out himself in redeeming those that were Cap-

B tives,

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tives, in relieving those that were oppressed, in restoring Religion and Liberty to those who sadly found the want of 'em, and in endeavouring to preserve the same to them and their Posterity.

When by Wearing and Use he had at length *unpointed* the 'Thorns of his Crown; when by often sitting on it, he had smoothed the ruggedness of his Throne, and by often treading in it had made the way of this Government plain, to a Person who by her Sex was more tender than himself: In a word, when he had done what Mortal could well do, when he seemed to have discharged his Commission, to have ripened those Effects for which Providence appointed him, and finished the Work for which he was sent; then was he straightway summoned to the other World, and then did his *Lamp*, not by Force, but of its own accord expire; then did he put off his wearied Body, resigned up his Dust, died in the Lord, and so *rested from his Labours*.

In handling my Text with respect to this Occasion, I think I need not rack my Invention for Sense or Expression, nor be forced to act the part of a mere Haranguer or Declaimer, but of an Herald or Messenger of Truth. And should I not do this. I should be wanting, not only in tender-heartedness to my departed Sovereign, but also in Duty to my Almighty God, who has expressed it as a Truth, or rather urg'd it to us by way of Precept, that the Memory of the Just *is*, or as 'tis in the Original, *shall be blessed*; that is in general, the Good and Vertuous, for so the Term *Just* signifies in Scripture, shall be remembred, as the Septuagint render it,

Mel' ex-

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μετ' ἐκδομίων, with Praise and Respect ; and shall claim a just Title to Esteem and Veneration : So that they will in some Sense live on Earth, even after Death, by being then *had in everlasting Re-^{Ps. 112. 6.}membrance.* Nor is this in any wise to rob God Almighty of his due Glory, but is rather to honour him in the Works of his Hands ; for tho our Praise be indeed immediately directed to the *Creature*, yet does it lastly terminate in the *Creator*, and so at once carries on that great Design of the Universe, which is the *Glory* of its Author. And thus while we shew our Esteem and Approbation of those that have been good, we do in the Issue glorify him from whom all Goodness flows ; this, besides the positive Injunction of God, is so just a Tribute to the Vertuous, that nothing less can be expected from those who survive 'em. In order to carry on which end, it has ever been customary, not only among *Christians*, but also among *Jews* and *Heathens*, to have some solemn Rites performed, and set Orations had, upon the Decease, and in the Honour of all deserving Persons.

Having then good ground for applying the Import of my Text to particular Examples, methinks I need make no Apology for handling it with a special regard to the present Occasion. But however, to justify yet further my Proceeding on this account, I shall in the first place remind you of what you cannot but know, how much *King William* deserved the Character of *Just*, that is, of Good and Vertuous, and in that how far he challenges the Consequence of it, that his *Memory should be blessed and praised.*

2. Having shewn agreeably to the Text, what we ought to do with reference to him, in view of his Death; I shall in the same View shew what we ought to do with reference to our selves, what Uses we ought to make of it in several respects: and last of all, that we should let this Instance of Mortality so influence our Practice, as to make us prepare for our own Departure, to live well that we may die well, and so our *Memory* also may deserve to be *blessed*.

1st. Then I proceed to remind you, how much our late *King* deserved the Character of *Just*, that is, of Good and Vertuous; and in that how far he challenges the Consequence of it, that his *Memory* ought to be *blessed* and praised. But shall I presume to venture on a Theme that is worthy of the Tongues and Pens, not only of Men, but Angels, and which could never describe it as it deserves? Shall I dare to meddle with the Character of an *Hero*, whom the great *Homer*, if he were now living, could not enough celebrate, and whom for me to praise would be only to dispraise him, because I can never speak of him what I ought, or as I ought? But on the other hand, to say nothing of him, would be, as I have hinted, unjust and indecent.

Wherefore not vainly to hold a Candle to the Sun, nor strive to increase his Brightness who shines of himself with so radiant a Lustre, and the Glory of whose Merit cannot but be lessened by my loftiest Expression, I shall not here attempt a general Character of him; but shall only speak of

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of him as becomes the Pulpit, with some particular Regards to his Goodness and Vertue: In which respect likewise I shall not pretend to finish all the Numbers of his Praise; but out of the abundance of his Merits this way, I shall only pick out and plainly mention, tho not commend, such of them (unless the bare naming of them be a Commendation) as my Duty will not suffer me to stifle or omit. What I shall thus say of him, I cannot but express with all possible Marks of Esteem and Veneration; and what I dare not, what I cannot say, I'll cover with a Veil, and still leave enough of his excellent Endowments, not only to imploy the Tongues, and to swell the Annals of the present Age; but also to cause the Wonder, if not the Disbelief, of future Generations.

Now to this purpose, what can I more fitly and more truly say of him, than that he was observant of this threefold Duty of a *Man* and a *Christian*; that he was Pious and Devout towards God, was Just and Kind to other Men, was Moderate and Sober as to himself?

1. I say, that he was pious and devout towards God. I am not unsensible that the Ignorant or the Envious may here prejudge me to maintain a Paradox, to assert such a Maxim, as either they did not know, or were unwilling to believe. For what has been more commonly reported by some, than that the King was indeed a Worldly Politician, but that he had no Piety; that in matter of Conscience he was a mere Libertine, and had at the bottom no Religion at all? Now not to mention that I could open the *real* grounds of this
scanda-

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scandalous Report, I was particularly inquisitive concerning his Conduct this way : and upon due Enquiry, I speak it as a Person that scorn to say any thing, even of Princes or the greatest Patrons, thro Interest or Bigotry, that I verily believe the Reverse of what I have often heard to be most true, that those very Persons who commonly said, that *he* had no Religion, had none themselves ; but were only stiff Adherents to a Party or a Faction, and branded all those with the odious Name of Libertines, who were only so free as to think or to act in a different way from *them*.

But what will not unbounded Malice do ? Whether with or without ground, it will burst forth and vent it self some way or other. Accordingly in this case no wonder, if having no Truth, but only Falshood on its side, it laid the Scene of its Reproaches and Slanders at a distance off, not so much in or about the City as in remote Countries : And thus did they sometimes pass for current Truths among those, who, as being utter Strangers to the King or his Court, could not directly contradict 'em ; whereas if they had but approached nearer to him, they would straightway have found, that tho the wicked had *forged a Lie against him*, yet he resolved with pious *David*, to serve the Lord *with his whole Heart* ; that he was intent upon the publick Worship of him, and this according to the Forms of our *Liturgy*, altho he had not been always used to 'em : yet in this Performance have I seen him as devout as the gravest Prelate assembled with him, and was pleased my self, with
others

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others there present, to see and learn Devoutness from a *King*. If through the Infirmities of Temper or the Hurrys of State, which for him to attend to was still to serve God: If by these, I say, he was sometimes hindred from *publick* Prayer, yet then, as I am assured, was he highly careful to compensate the Neglect of that Office in *private*: I say, in private, which shewed his inward Principle to be real and sincere; forasmuch as then he had none but God for his Judge and Spectator, and could depend on none but him, *who sees in secret, to reward him* Mat. 6. 6. *openly*. Thus did he act, not by himself, but God, still earnestly imploring his Blessing and Assistance; and, even while he was fighting with one Hand, holding up the other for the Influence of Heaven.

Accordingly the Lord, in *whose Hand the King's* Prov. 22. 1. *Heart* was, turn'd it to his own most excellent Purposes; so as that He, whom we sometimes obeyed; *constantly* obeyed; and drove at those ends which the King of Kings drives at; that is, at promoting the Happiness of Men, and the general Good of the Universe. No wonder then, if having Omnipotence to aid and assist him, he often brought about those stupendious Events, which to the present Age appeared as Miracles, and which Posterity will hardly credit. In short, to shew that *God was with him*, nothing was hard or insuperable to him, but only Death; he struggled with *Serpents*, manfully crush'd and overcame 'em in his Cradle; nay and from thence, even to his Departure, he still contended with, and surmounted more Difficulties and Dangers, than perhaps any Prince ever did.

How

How then can we otherwise imagine, but that the good Ends for which he acted, and which were thus *marvellous in our Eyes*, were the doings of the Lord? And why? *Because the King put his Trust in the Lord, and in the Mercy of the most High, he did not miscarry; the Law of God was in his Heart, and therefore his Goings did not slide.*

Ps. 118.

23.

Ps. 37. 31.

Now He who in the first place thus feared, and was in the Issue thus favoured by God, must also be supposed to be uniform in his Duty, and observant of all the Divine Commands, and among others, of those which regard his Neighbour. And that he was so, will, *zly.* appear, in that he strictly kept the Law of *Righteousness*, and was just and kind to other Men. To go no further back, this he abundantly shewed, in asserting our Rights, and did not in the least demonstrate the contrary, as some may fancy, in his first Accession to these Kingdoms: for he did not then take and usurp, but rather sound and accepted that Crown which was untimely fallen from the Head of another, thro a breach of those Terms, which had placed it on; and then for other weighty Reasons was by the Nation esteemed his Due.

In the Sequel of his Government, so far was he from invading any ones Property, that he was most liberal in giving of his own; he constantly sacrificed his own Quiet for the common Safety, frequently hazarded, and probably shortened his own Life by the Fatigues he underwent in the Protection of ours; and expended, as I am credibly informed, not a little of his own private Stock, for the general Good of the Publick. Thus did he

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he not only render to all their due, but often gave to some yet more than was their due. Wherein if through deceitful Importunities or cozening Solicitations, he sometimes chanc'd to be imposed on, so as that his Kindness exceeded his Prudence; and he conferred on private Persons what in point of Convenience, if not of Justice, belonged much rather to the Publick; yet no sooner was he certified of this, where Instances of this Nature had been exorbitant, but he, though a *Sovereign*, quietly submitted to the Determination of his *Subjects*, retracted what he had before unwittingly done, and desired better Counsel for the future.

If again, as all must grant, and some may judge, he even erred in point of *Kindness*, in that he was too favourable to those, who are not of our Church-Communion; if in any permissive, I cannot say any positive Instance he ever was so, it was because he thought that they increased the Number of his Friends; or that he, as a Governor, had nothing to do with the Consciences of those, who did not disturb or interfere with his Government. On the other hand, if he was at any time backward and cold in his Favours to some Members of our Church, it was either because their Ambition exceeded their Desert, or because he thought 'em either useless or improper for the Ends they aimed at; or else because they themselves had taught him to suspect them, as having without ground suspected *him* first. So that if he ever was a seeming Enemy to some, it was their unreasonable

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Enmity

Enmity to him that made him so; albeit he never directly assaulted, but only raised his Batterys, and so secured himself against 'em, while in the main he never meditated Retaliation even abroad, much less at home, upon any other Foes, but Pride, Injustice and Usurpation. In short, by his Mildness and Forbearance he melted and won over many, who by long Observation perceived his disinterested Aims, and that he desired not theirs, but only wished their Happiness; that to shew his ready compliance, and *to become all things to all Men*, he ruled as a Subject, and almost resigned the Scepter to the hands of his Inferiors: In which

Eccl. 4. 18. Sense his *Wisdom* and Moderation were *better than*
 Prov. 16. *the Weapons of War*: And by *Righteousness* did he
 12. *establish his Throne*. Again, whatever some may

think, speaking of his Justice and Kindness, I might here out of many, single out this Instance of his Conjugal Affection to our late Queen; that herein he shewed himself the best of Husbands, by transforming himself, as it were, into her, and making one Soul to inspire them both: Nay here I might mention that he loved her, even better than himself, inasmuch as when she was wrested from him, he could very hardly stay behind, and by swooning away at her Death, betrayed his Desire to follow her, and so at once expressed his Sadness and his Love. He, who even in a cool Temper, upon his last Bed, much less in the Hurry and Heats of War, never dreaded the Prospect of his own Death. But I must remember the Bounds of this Discourse, and hasten to what I next proposed to speak of;
 namely,

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namely, That our late King was not only Just and Kind, as to his Government of others, and his Conduct towards those he was concerned with, but also was regular and exact as to the Government of Himself, and the Moderation of his own Affections.

I do not find that he had any other Passion, but Zeal for the Publick, and a Desire to maintain the Protestant Religion: Greater he was in the *ruling of Himself* than of Kingdoms and People; Great he was in Adversity by his Courage, in Prosperity by his Modesty, in Difficulties by his Prudence, in Dangers by his Valour, and in Religion by his Piety. And amidst all his Grandeur he had one other Method of becoming yet greater, in that, as we know, he would often stoop down, and make himself as little as the least of his Subjects. In short, what a Noble Model does he remain of Confidence without Presumption, of Fear without Infirmary, of Desire without Ambition, of Resentment without Hatred, of Love without Artifice, of Constancy without Affectation, and that as well at the point of Death as in his Life? For to demonstrate that he *kept Innocency, and took heed to do the thing that was Right*, Pl. 37. 37. *he enjoyed great Peace at the last.* With what an even, undaunted Temper did he bid the Standers by Farewel, and laid down all his Crowns, with those Conquerors in the *Revelation, at the Feet of* Rev. 4. *the Throne of Christ Jesus?*

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On this Head I also add, that I could never be assured, that he was ever addicted to any Excess by way of Intemperance, or, as some have too boldly given out, by the way of Lasciviousness. This, alas, may serve as an Amusement, rather to those Kings, who dissolve themselves in Luxury and Ease, and who sometimes abuse the Blessings of Peace to far worse Purposes, than could have ensued from the Troubles of War. But how should he be given to Effeminacy or Softness, who besides the Abhorrence he always expressed of it, was constantly hurried with the Tumults of State, and the *Contradictions of People*? Nay very hardly could he ever come to the enjoyment of Peace and Repose, but straightway it vanished and cheated his Desire. Upon the whole then it must be concluded, that our King

Tit. 2. 12. gave Diligence to live Godly, Righteously and Soberly in this present World, and so, as a Man and
2Pet. 1. 10. a Christian, to make his Calling and Election sure.

I say, not only as a Man, but a Christian: for had he not raised himself above mere Human Vertues, I might then have rang'd him with the *Scipio's* and the *Fabius's*; but he as far exceeded those Lovers of *Glory*, and their *Country*, as the Light of the Gospel exceeds that of Nature; while he had respect to a far greater *Recompence of Reward*, and was chiefly solicitous to have his Name *written*, not in our perishing Histories, but in the *Book of Life*. Wherefore he having thus lived, and having thus died, I leave you all to judg, how far he merited the Title of *Just*,
of

of Good and Vertuous, and how much his *Memory* deserves to be *blessed*.

Indeed I would not seem to represent him or any Son of *Adam*, as a Model of Perfection, but only as a Pattern of a willing Mind; and add, that what particular Exceptions may be made against his Character, were either to be imputed to the Frailties of Nature in general, or to his particular Infirmities; either to the Difficulty of Junctures, or the Multiplicity of Business. For do but consider that among such a great Diversity of Humours and Interests, which it was his Business to unite all together, he was but one single, tho a very great Man; that he could not see all, could not do all by himself; that therefore he might sometimes *indeed* err, and might sometimes be thought to err, when albeit it was the Fault of ill Instruments, and not of him that was *forced* to use them, as not being able among such Variety to discern and choose the Good from the Bad. These and some other plain Allowances being made, it must needs be owned, that, in imitation of Him by whom Kings reign, he set no other Bounds to his Love of the Community, than what God set to his Power; that accordingly he has done us unspeakable Good, and never *designedly* did us any Hurt; and whatever hurt may have happened through Necessity or Accident, not through his Choice or Design, will not bear the least proportion to the Benefits he wrought. If any Man be so ignorant as not to know, or so envious or ungrateful as
not

not to own this; To name no more, I once for all desire him to recollect the time, when
 ‘ God set Bounds to the Oppression of the People,
 ‘ and to the Affliction of his Church, when by
 ‘ one sudden Stroke he stopt the Progress of that
 ‘ Power which threatned all the World; when
 ‘ the Allwise Governor of the Universe, who disposes second Causes according to his Pleasure, thought
 ‘ fit to chain the Preservation of *England*, and of
 ‘ many other Countries, to the Resolution of but
 ‘ one Man; when the Laws, Rights, Liberty and
 ‘ Religion of so many Nations were intrusted by
 ‘ Providence to the Inconstancy of the Waves;
 ‘ when even the Tempests served in so wonderful a
 ‘ manner to advance the Work of our Deliverance;
 when unbloody Victories executed the Designs of God’s Mercy; when the Armies of the Wicked were subdued by the Harmony and Union of our Minds; when the Deliverer appeared, and the Terrors of God seized on our Enemies; and that now by the miraculous Blessing of God on the noblest and most necessary Undertaking of our Age, *England* is still suffered to enjoy her Laws, the Church to serve God, *Queen Anne* to succeed our King, and we to live and breath.

But is this *Christian Hero*, He through whom, next under God, these mighty things were done; He who just now governed States, directed Councils, headed Armies, gained Victories, and was the very Soul of many whole Nations: Is he dead? He is dead! He that was thus mighty is fallen! Thus hath *Sion* lost the fairest of her Orna-
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naments, and the most precious of her Pillars;
the *Breath of our Nostrils*, and Him, of whom we
said, *We shall rest under his Shadow!* Now he be-
ing dead, how shall we live? Or how at least
can we but mourn for him, as *Judah and Jeru* 2 Chron.
salem did for *Josiah*? How can we but bewail, and 35. 24.
make *Lamentation* for him, and mourn many Days,
as the *Jews* also did for the *Warlike Macchabee*, 1 Macch.
saying, *How is the valiant Man fallen, that de-* 4. 20, 21.
livered Israel! Let our three Kingdoms then hide
themselves in Sable, to shew their inward Grief:
Let *Germany* and *Holland*, with all our neighbour-
ing Friends, waft themselves over in Floods of
Tears, and come and lament *Britannia's Fate*:
Let them bring their *Cypress* with them, and here
adorn our Monarch's *Herse*. Nay let *Aspiring*
France and *Spain* now at length revere his *Memo-*
ry, and if they could not but envy him when liv-
ing, yet after the manner of Men, let them cease
to envy him now he is dead.

But is *All* of him dead, and have we no room
for Consolation, either on his own account or ours?
His *Dust* is indeed returned to the *Earth* as it Eccles. 12.
was: But was that corruptible Lump of Matter 7.
the *Whole* of this Great Man? Surely there was
in it a more noble Inhabitant, a Divine and
pure Spirit, which is now removed, and lately
returned to God that gave it. For certainly if
any Man's ever yet were, his Great Name and
Soul are immortal; and will for ever live in the
Temple of *Memory*, and the Regions of *Bliss*.
The Scripture gives us good ground to hope,
that

Cicero in
Fragment.
cui Titulus
Sonnium
Scipionis.

that He whom God so *signally guided by his Counsel*, is now *received to his Glory*; that He, who lived not for himself, but others, and was continually tossed by Surges and Tempests, is now at length arrived at the Haven of Rest, and in exchange for his corruptible one has now obtained a *Crown that is incorruptible*. And certainly this I may venture to pronounce, even from the Judgment of a *Heathen*; Know of a certain, that for all Men, who have saved their Country from Ruin, *signally served its Interests, amplified and bettered the Condition thereof, there is a determinate Seat allotted in Heaven, where they shall enjoy an everlasting Age of Bliss*. And again, says the same *Heathen*; It is a piece of *Justice and Piety to be useful to Parents and Relations; but to be useful to ones Country, that is the greatest Justice and Piety, that is the way to Heaven*. How far King *William* bore this Character, and may be now supposed to share in this Reward, you very well know.

Wherefore, as this minds me to consider in the next place, what further Uses shall we make of this Dispensation? Shall we, after natural Affection has had its due vent, still go on to dissolve our selves in Tears, which cannot profit either him or our selves; which cannot *bring him back to us, tho we may hereafter go to him*. We cannot in this case lament his Loss, because for him *to die was certainly his Gain*. Shall we then lament our own Loss? This we may indeed do, but all in vain: albeit in a strict Sense, neither

ther can his Death be termed our Loss; for had we any Right or Property in him? Did God Almighty give, and did he not rather lend him to us? Wherefore let us not repine that we had him no longer; but rather thank God that we had him so long, and reaped unspeakable Benefits by him. Let us thank God, that he took him not from us, till a most convenient Juncture, when all things concurred to make the Way to Majesty plain for our Gracious Queen. Let us thank God, that She by this occasion is accordingly fixed upon the Throne, that in Her we have the greatest Hopes of being Considerable abroad, and Prosperous at home; of admiring in Her the Virtues of *William*, still reviving and increasing; and of seeing the *British* Scepter bud forth as it were, and flourish in her Hand. In this Prospect then may we dry up our Tears, rather than by an importunate sadness seem to envy our late King's Happiness, or to allay the teeming Joys of our present Queen: but rather it will behove us to pay our Respect to the One, by blessing his *Memory*, and extolling His Worth; and to the other, by rejoicing at her Welfare, by obeying Her Commands, and by praying for Her Safety and Continuance amongst us. Having thus made our Submission to God, paid our Devoir to our late King, and professed on this occasion our Fidelity to our Queen: let us lastly, in View of this Instance of Mortality, reflect an Eye back upon our selves. Seeing it is plain that the Greatest of Men must submit to the stroke of Death, and yield themselves to this *cruel Necessity*; let us not

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imagine that we are exempted from the same common Fate, but let this mind us to live as those
 Heb. 9.27. who must once die, and after that be judged: let
 us examine and repent for the past, be careful and
 obedient in our future Conduct; that so, when the
 Eccl. 12.6. Silver Cord is loosed, and the Golden Bowl broken,
 Ps. 23.4. when we walk thro the Valley and Shadow of Death,
 2Tim. 4.6. and the time of our Departure is at hand, we
 Phil. 1.23. may fear no Evil, but may even desire, with St. Paul,
 to be dissolved and be with Christ, which is far better.
 When having given up our accounts with
 Chearfulness, in Heaven we shall reap unspeak-
 able Joys, and on Earth our Memory will also be
 blessed.



FINIS.